

Washington State Patrol

Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



Captain Jeff DeVere
Government and Media Relations
(360) 753-5299 – office
(360) 753-5469 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

*****For Immediate Release*****

Date: November 9, 2006

Contact: Trooper Mike Kesler

(360) 449-7960 Office

(360) 906-2405 Pager

mike.kesler@wsp.wa.gov

Fugitive Truck Driver Dies in California

Vancouver – On June 8, 2006 at approximately 4:40 p.m., Diego J. Ayala was traveling southbound I-5 between La Center and Ridgefield when his 2002 Freightliner smashed into a 2006 Toyota Highlander, trapping the Highlander under the front bumper. The Freightliner then struck four other vehicles before veering into a guardrail and bursting into flames. A 1994 Honda Passport which was one of the other four vehicles burst into flames as well.

The Highlander's driver, Amir Hozaien of Vienna, Austria, died in the collision. Nine other people including Ayala were injured in the collision.

On October 25, 2006, WSP Detective Hobbs was notified by the Clark County Prosecutor's Office indicating a warrant was issued for Ayala after he failed to appear for his scheduled first appearance. Ayala was charged with one count of vehicular homicide and six counts of vehicular assault.

Detective Hobbs immediately took action to attempt to locate Ayala.

On November 8, 2006, Detective Hobbs learned that on October 16th Ayala died at Queen of the Valley Hospital in West Covina, California.

Detective Hobbs received a copy of the death certificate from Queen of the Valley Hospital confirming Ayala died of cancer.

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